



## Call to Action: “Ambiti@n – Women in STEM”

Lisbon, 8 November 2017

### Context

Getting and keeping girls interested in STEM is not just good for the world—it’s good for them. According to the U.S. Department of Commerce, STEM occupations are growing nearly twice as fast as non-STEM occupations. In addition, STEM workers earn 26% more than their non-STEM counterparts.

Gender bias still exists. The myth that “women’s minds just aren’t wired for STEM work” must be dispelled. Young girls, female college students and professional women must have the tools, resources and opportunities they need to excel in areas of STEM.

Promoting the active role of women in STEM fields contributes to achieving economic growth as well as diminishing gender disparity in economic status. Providing young girls and women with the access and encouragement to pursue education and careers in STEM can help achieve the goal of gender equality and empowerment, which is the 5<sup>th</sup> objective outlined in the Sustainable Development Goals of the UN.

### Goal

WPL proposes the following policy actions designed to get and keep more girls and women in STEM. The goal is to increase the number of undergraduate women enrolling in and declaring majors in the fields of Science, Technology, Engineering, Maths, Manufacturing and Design by 30% by the year 2030.

### Actions to achieve the goal

- Develop education policies to engage girls between the ages of 5 and 18 through initiatives designed to spark interest in STEM at a young age.
- Incentivise college-aged women to pursue careers in STEM fields and professional women to commit to STEM career paths for the long-term.
- Establish EU funding to implement programmes to increase the number of women pursuing graduate level research in STEM fields.
- Fund more scholarships with leading academic institutions to increase the number of women enrolling in and graduating with STEM programmes and degrees.
- Establish EU funding to identify and implement best practices for attracting, recruiting and retaining the world’s best technical female talent.
- Encourage more positive reinforcement (mentoring programmes, career counselling) from an early age to stop a “leaky pipeline,” in which talented girls eventually steer away from careers in STEM and pursue work in fields where they believe they will perform better.
- Work towards more Digital Inclusion by investing in the closure of The Technology Gap so that more women have access to all forms of technology (Internet).